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Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic

Report of the Secretary-General*

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* The present report was prepared on the basis of replies from organizations and bodies of the United Nations system and Member States.

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, on 29 November 2000, adopted resolution 55/49, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic", in which it took note of the report of the Secretary-General (A/55/476) and requested the relevant organizations, organs and bodies of the United Nations system to render all appropriate assistance that States members of the zone might seek in their joint efforts to implement the declaration of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. By the same resolution, the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to keep the implementation of resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986 and subsequent resolutions on the matter under review and to submit a report to it at its fifty-sixth session, taking into account, inter alia, the views expressed by Member States.

2. Pursuant to the above-mentioned resolution, the Secretary-General addressed a note verbale dated 16 May 2001 to the Governments of States Members requesting their views on the implementation of the declaration of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. On 16 May, letters were also dispatched to the relevant organizations and bodies of the United Nations requesting them to submit their contributions for the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General by 31 July 2001.

3. As at 30 September 2001, four Governments had replied and communications had been received from five of the organizations and United Nations bodies addressed. Those replies are reflected in sections II and III of the present report, respectively. Any further replies received will be contained in an addendum to the present report.

II. Replies received from Governments

Argentina

[Original: Spanish]
[30 July 2001]

1. The Argentine Republic understands that the zone, as the only interregional mechanism bringing together South American and African countries, is an appropriate framework in which to strengthen political consultation on issues of mutual interest, particularly cooperation for development strategies among its members, with a view to establishing closer, more active and more dynamic relations.

2. Argentina reaffirms its conviction that the objectives of peace and cooperation that inspired the establishment of the zone can be attained only if the institutions of representative democracy are fully effective and if human rights and fundamental freedoms are duly respected in the countries of the region. Noteworthy in this connection are the conclusions of the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held at Cotonou from 4 to 6 December 2000.

3. The Argentine Republic has assumed the role of coordinator of the zone's Standing Committee because it has a special interest in peace-building and in promoting relations of cooperation among the States members of the zone. In this context, it has proposed a series of actions with the aim of making progress in the various areas of the Buenos Aires plan of action, adopted at the fifth meeting of States members of the zone, held at Buenos Aires on 21 and 22 October 1998 (see A/53/650, annex).

4. With regard to paragraph 3 of the Buenos Aires plan of action, on the strengthening of trade ties within the zone, Argentina believes that a broad range of trade and investment opportunities exists, and therefore calls on Member States to step up the exchange of information on missions, fairs and congresses, and of statistical data on supply, demand and the economic and trade characteristics of the States members of the zone. In this regard, Argentina welcomes the signing, in December 2000, of a framework agreement for the creation of a free trade area between the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) and South Africa. It also notes that, in May 2001, a delegation from MERCOSUR went to Abuja, with support provided by the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, in order to attend a first meeting with the Economic Community of West African States. That meeting gave rise to an exchange of experience, problems and solutions, which were set forth in a final communiqué.

5. Further progress should be made in the development of joint activities related to education, health, scientific and academic research, cultural exchange, State administration and reform, tourism and sports. Technical cooperation could also be increased. In particular, since the Latin American countries are

relatively more advanced in the prevention and treatment of HIV/AIDS, and in view of the magnitude of this problem in Africa, consideration could be given to the possibility of establishing specific mechanisms for cooperation in this area.

6. Argentina welcomes the adoption by the Committee on Fisheries of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations at its twenty-fourth session in March 2001, of the International Plan of Action to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing. This instrument, although of a non-binding nature, can further the objective of eradicating such fishing practices. Argentina believes that, once the 1993 Agreement to promote compliance with international conservation and management measures by fishing vessels on the high seas enters into force, it will, as a binding instrument, contribute to achieving the objective of responsible fishing. It should be recalled that, in order to prevent cases of dual registration, the States members of the zone undertook to cooperate among themselves in the exchange of information on the registry of fishing vessels flying their flags.

7. With regard to cooperation in the prevention of drug abuse and combating drug trafficking and related crimes (Buenos Aires plan of action, para. 7), Argentina reiterates the need to broaden and intensify the exchange of information on such topics as illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, prevention and assistance programmes, money-laundering and chemical precursors. In addition, it supports the inclusion of the issue of demand reduction, including drug abuse prevention and treatment, as a relevant item for discussion.

8. In view of the foregoing, the Argentine Republic wishes to emphasize its proposal that, in order to broaden and intensify the exchange of information on the actions taken by each member State to combat the drug problem, the States members of the zone should, at their next ministerial meeting, define modalities for intra-zone cooperation in order to ensure the development of common initiatives.

9. In relation to the provisions of paragraph 8 of the Buenos Aires plan of action, the States members of the zone have not yet coordinated the preparation of a request to the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) to provide technical assistance for the zone. In this regard, the Argentine Republic would welcome a joint evaluation, by the States members of the zone, of the preparation of a specific proposal for submission to UNDCP without further delay. It should be noted, in this connection, that Argentina submitted a draft resolution on international assistance to the States most affected by the transit of drugs, which was adopted by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its forty-fourth session. In that resolution, the Commission requests UNDCP to extend the technical assistance that those countries need in view of their geographical location.

10. With regard to paragraph 9 of the Buenos Aires plan of action, and taking into account the outcome of the recent United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, Argentina invites the States members of the zone to explore joint initiatives to implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects[1] adopted by the Conference. Such activities could include cooperation in tracing these weapons, the exchange of experience with regard to national systems for marking and registering weapons, and training of competent officials and judicial assistance in this field.

11. Argentina reiterates its invitation to the international community, in particular to the States members of the zone, to sign and ratify the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction.[2]

12. Argentina once again expresses the hope that the conflicts which, regrettably, still affect States members of the zone can be resolved with the speed warranted by humanitarian emergencies. In the meantime, Argentina believes that the zone is a suitable framework for making known to all interested nations its willingness to cooperate in the peaceful solution of regional conflicts. Argentina is prepared to continue to contribute to peace-building, security, justice and growth in the States members of the zone.

13. It is important to point out the continuing special and unusual colonial status of the Malvinas, South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands in the South Atlantic, which affects the territorial integrity of the Argentine Republic. Argentina wishes to express its satisfaction with the level reached in its overall bilateral relations with the United Kingdom of Great

Britain and Northern Ireland. Nonetheless, despite Argentina's effort to promote dialogue and a peaceful and lasting solution of the question of the Malvinas, its commitment to respecting the way of life of the islands' inhabitants and numerous appeals by the international community for a negotiated solution, it has not been possible to resume negotiations to end the sovereignty by dispute. The Argentine Republic believes that a solution to this important issue will help to consolidate stability and cooperation in the South Atlantic on a permanent basis.

Dominican Republic

[Original: Spanish]
[22 August 2001]

1. The Dominican Government reiterates its support for the establishment of a zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic so as to guarantee cooperation among the countries of the region. It expresses its solidarity with the implementation of all of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 55/49, especially paragraphs 6, 7 and 8, in which the Assembly, inter alia, welcomed the progress made towards the entry into force of the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America and the Caribbean (Treaty of Tlatelolco)[3] and the entry into force of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and other Related Materials.

2. The Dominican Government affirms the importance of the approval of these instruments, which are in the spirit of General Assembly resolution 41/11 of 27 October 1986, by which the Assembly solemnly declared the Atlantic Ocean, in the region situated between Africa and South America, the "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

Gambia

[Original: English]
[27 July 2001]

The declaration of the Atlantic Ocean as the "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic" is most welcome, as well as the decision to include this item in the agenda of the fifty-sixth session of the General Assembly. The Secretary-General is therefore urged to ensure the implementation of Assembly resolution 41/41 and all subsequent resolutions relating to the subject.

South Africa

[Original: English]
[21 August 2001]

1. South Africa welcomes the objectives of General Assembly resolution 55/49 of 29 November 2000. The Government of South Africa remains committed to the principles and objectives of the final declaration and plan of action adopted at the fifth meeting of the States members of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic, held at Buenos Aires on 21 and 22 October 1998, and reaffirms its belief in the zone as a valuable instrument for promoting international peace and security as well as development cooperation by bridging two nuclear-weapon-free continents and a nuclear-free ocean.

2. South Africa supports international efforts to establish peace and the creation of an environment conducive to cooperation and, in this regard, calls for the reaffirmation of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and of all States in the region and, encouraged by recent developments, urges all parties to the conflict to remain committed to fulfilling their obligations under the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement (S/1999/815, annex), while calling on the United Nations to ensure the full and timely implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions.

3. South Africa welcomes the adoption of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects by the United Nations Conference held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001. South Africa recognizes the importance of regional initiatives, in particular in Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean, as basis for the Programme of Action. South Africa wishes to emphasize the value of a regional approach to effectively dealing with the problems associated with the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

4. South Africa welcomes the adoption, in November 2000, of the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/CONF.192/PC/23, annex) and the

subsequent decision adopted by the African Heads of State at Lusaka; the Declaration concerning Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) (A/CONF.192/PC/35, annex) as well as the Protocol on the Control of Firearms, Ammunition and Other Related Materials, adopted by the SADC Heads of State; the initiatives taken by States members of the Economic Community of West African States to conclude their Declaration on a Moratorium on the Importation, Exportation and Manufacture of Small Arms and Light Weapons in West Africa (A/53/763-S/1998/1194, annex); the entry into force of the Inter-American Convention against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives and Other Related Materials; and the adoption by the Organization of American States of the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisition.

5. Following the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, South Africa considers closer cooperation between African and Latin American States of central importance. To this end, cooperation within the context of the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic should be further enhanced.

6. All international efforts to counter illicit traffic in narcotics should be supported and South Africa remains committed to the support of regional cooperation to combat this problem, as demonstrated by its accession to the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances[4] in 1998.

7. As part of the implementation of the plan of action of the Zone pertaining to maritime matters, South Africa can report that a signing ceremony for the South Atlantic Fisheries Organization agreement took place at Windhoek on 20 April 2001. The South African High Commissioner at Windhoek signed the Agreement on behalf of South Africa.

8. States members of the zone are confronted with many issues of common concern. Issues such as poverty alleviation, ensuring the sustainable use and protection of natural resources and achieving growth, stability, security and sustainable human development are of core concern to South Africa. The zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic can play a key role in finding solutions and providing mutual support when confronting these issues. To this end, an annual meeting at the level of permanent missions in New York, to exchange views, coordinate strategies and adopt a common regional position among member States would be an important forum in which similar experiences can be shared and solutions sought to common problems.

III. Replies received from organizations and bodies of the United Nations system

A. Department for Disarmament Affairs

1. On 26 January 2001, the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Department for Disarmament Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding setting out the legal framework for cooperation between OAS and the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this agreement, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission and the Regional Centre are designated as the implementing institutions for projects on illicit trafficking in firearms, ammunition and explosives. On 12 and 18 June 2001, discussions were initiated with MERCOSUR and the Andean Group, respectively, to sign additional memoranda of understanding to facilitate the organization of training courses and other activities related to the issue of firearms in the region.

2. The Regional Centre also supported the Government of Brazil in organizing the regional preparatory meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, held at Brasilia from 22 to 24 November 2000. Representatives of Latin American and the Caribbean States met to seek a common approach to the issue of illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, with a view to contributing a regional perspective to the 2001 United Nations conference and its preparatory process.

3. The Centre initiated several activities on the landmine issue during the period under review. It provided substantive support and assistance to the Government of Canada and OAS in the organization of a regional seminar on stockpiling and destruction of

anti-personnel mines in the Americas, held at Buenos Aires from 6 to 8 November 2000. The Centre also organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Mine Action Service, the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining and the Government of Peru, a regional technical workshop on the revision and future implementation of international mine action standards, which are under preparation by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining. The workshop, which was held at Lima on 31 May and 1 June 2001, was part of a global outreach programme aimed at discussing and exploring the practical application of the proposed international standards and guidelines, assist national mine action authorities to develop their own national standards and standard operating procedures to reflect the requirements of the international standards, and to develop a broad consensus for the international standards.

4. The Centre organized a workshop on the theme "Disarmament and development: new challenges and options" at Lima, on 11 June 2000. The workshop, which was inaugurated by the then Head of the Ministers Council and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Peru and former United Nations Secretary-General, Javier Pérez de Cuéllar, was aimed at emphasizing the importance of the close relationship between disarmament and development. Other such regional meetings are expected to be organized in the future.

5. Through the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the Department for Disarmament Affairs organized, together with OAU, a follow-up meeting to the first continental meeting of African experts on small arms and light weapons that was held at Addis Ababa in 2000. This first meeting of African policy makers at the ministerial level, organized by OAU with the support of the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, was held at Bamako on 30 November and 1 December 2000. The meeting adopted the Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (A/CONF.192/PC/23, annex), in preparation for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in New York from 9 to 20 July 2001.

6. Following the adoption of the African common position, the Regional Centre organized, at Lomé on 9 and 10 December 2000, an all-African civil society consultation. This meeting enabled some 84 civil society organizations to adopt a plan of action in support of the implementation of the Bamako Declaration.

B. Department of Public Information

1. United Nations Radio provided extensive news coverage, in its daily news and current affairs magazines, to the situations in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Liberia, Senegal and Sierra Leone. The stories included those on: the role of diamonds in the wars in Angola and Sierra Leone; the HIV/AIDS situation in Africa; the refugee situations in Africa; child soldiers in Sierra Leone; United Nations humanitarian aid to displaced civilians along the Liberian and Guinean borders; the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone chairing of peace talks between the Government of Sierra Leone and the Revolutionary United Front; the disarmament talks held at Lusaka as part of the peace process for the Democratic Republic of the Congo; exodus and poverty in rural areas in Brazil; keeping the Caribbean as a zone of peace; Argentina's claim to the Falkland Islands (Malvinas); and HIV/AIDS pharmaceutical companies withdrawing their court battle against South Africa.

2. Gathering together for the first time, representatives of parties to the conflict in the Democratic Republic of the Congo participated in a round-table discussion convened at United Nations Headquarters by United Nations Radio on 22 February 2001. Representatives included the Foreign Minister of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Leonard She Okitundu; the Ambassador of Burundi to the United Nations, Marc Nteturuye; the Minister in the Presidency of Rwanda, Patrick Mazimhaka; and the Minister for Presidential Affairs of Zambia, Eric Silwamba. Moderated by the Secretary-General's Special Adviser on Africa, the broadcast was fed live to 10 countries in Africa.

3. United Nations Radio also produced 17 magazine and/or feature programmes in Chinese, English, French, French-Creole, Hindi, Portuguese and Spanish. Some of the topics were: "The bloodiest diamonds of Africa"; "AIDS prevention: the examples of the United Republic of Tanzania and South Africa"; "Peace agreement between the Senegalese Government and the

pro-independence movement of Casamance"; and "A future city in Brazil".

4. On 29 November 2000, the Meetings Coverage Section of the Department of Public Information reported on the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 55/49 on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic. On 20 November 2000, it highlighted the adoption of a related resolution (55/33 I), on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

5. United Nations Television provided coverage of the General Assembly meeting at which resolution 55/49 was adopted. The Video Section produced and distributed in five official languages the following UN in Action and CNN World Report videos: "UNICEF launches vaccination campaign against polio in Sierra Leone"; "Disarmament in the Republic of the Congo"; "Liberian refugees become self-sufficient as they wait in camp in Ghana"; and "United Nations Radio promotes peace and development in the Central African Republic". A two and a half minute version of each was aired on the CNN World Report.

6. Activities carried out by the Public Affairs Division of the Department of Public Information included the annual training programme for broadcasters and journalists from developing countries, held at Headquarters from 29 August to 6 October 2000, in which candidates from Nicaragua and Guinea participated, and a special display of the United Nations peacekeeping exhibit at the State House of Ghana, at Accra. The special opening ceremony was attended by the Secretary-General and the then President of Ghana, Jerry Rawlings; briefings on the following topics were organized for non-governmental organizations: "Civil society and the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms: UN action" (29 October 2000); "The role of blood diamonds in fuelling conflicts in Africa" (1 February 2001); and "Small arms: a humanitarian issue" (20 March 2001).

7. During the period under review, activities of the United Nations information centres in the region included radio and television interviews about Ghana's contribution to United Nations and regional peacekeeping missions (centre at Accra); lectures on post-conflict peace-building efforts in Central America (centre at Buenos Aires); symposia and conferences on peace and non-violence and on conflict prevention (centres at Lagos and Lomé, respectively); and airing on television of the United Nations documentary "Armed to the teeth", on the illicit trade in small arms (centres at Yaoundé and Windhoek). In addition, there were: media briefings, seminars, conferences, educational outreach and radio programmes concerning the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance held at Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001 (centres at Accra, Buenos Aires, Dakar and Yaoundé); and radio and television programmes concerning refugees and a visit by journalists to refugee camps of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to mark African Refugee Day (centres at Accra, Lagos and Yaoundé). Further, with regard to development issues, there were: lectures on social development and the challenges of globalization (centre at Lagos); promotion of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development *World Investment Report* (centres at Accra, Buenos Aires and Dakar); and a media briefing on the United Nations Internet initiative for Africa (centre at Accra). Tree planting events to mark World Environment Day were organized by the centres at Buenos Aires and Lagos, and a media briefing on the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climatic Change was organized by the centre at Accra.

8. The 1998 volume of the *Yearbook of the United Nations*, which was published in April 2001, cited the Secretary-General's report on the zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic (A/53/488) and related reports submitted by States or regional groups, including the final declaration and plan of action adopted at the fifth meeting of the States of the zone (A/53/650, annex). The volume also reproduced the full text of General Assembly resolution 53/34 of 25 November 1998, entitled "Zone of peace and cooperation of the South Atlantic".

C. United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

The United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) supports technical assistance programmes in both Brazil and southern Africa. In the context of such work, UNDCP promotes interregional cooperation in programme formulation and training, such as that carried out when Brazilian HIV/AIDS specialists advised southern African countries on best

practice in HIV/AIDS prevention at the community level.

D. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

The mandate of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations does not extend to the political aspects of the subject under review. Its technical assistance is usually delivered through consolidated appeal processes in the case of humanitarian assistance, and will be increasingly delivered through United Nations development assistance frameworks (or comprehensive development frameworks) in the case of more development-oriented technical assistance. Specific information is therefore provided in other reports of the Secretary-General dealing specifically with humanitarian assistance, operational activities and sustainable development, which are usually submitted to the Economic and Social Council. The organization is, however, mindful that such technical assistance, whether delivered in a humanitarian or development context, or whether using modalities such as technical cooperation among developing countries, does contribute to conflict prevention and to situations that are conducive to durable peace.

F. United Nations Industrial Development Organization

Although the United Nations Industrial Development Organization is not directly involved in the implementation of General Assembly resolution 55/49, it contributes to this process by promoting industrial cooperation among the countries of the region between Africa and South America through programmatic activities and those undertaken in the context of its global forum functions. Nineteen integrated programmes are now under way in the countries of the region. The programmes address the issue of sustainable industrial development and promote industrial cooperation by improving industrial governance and institutional infrastructure, strengthening small and medium-sized enterprises, upgrading export, trade and technological capacities, and adopting emergency efficiency and cleaner production measures.

Notes

[1] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9-20 July 2001* (A/CONF.192/15), sect. IV.

[2] See CD/1478.

[3] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 634, No. 9068.

[4] See *Official Records of the United Nations Conference for the Adoption of a Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Vienna, 25 November-20 December 1988*, vol. I (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.XI.5).